

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR IDENTIFICATION TAGGING DOCUMENTS IN A COMPUTER SYSTEM

Abstract of the Disclosure

A method and apparatus for tracing of computer documents is disclosed. A
5 computer processor stores a processor identifier that is unique to the particular
processor. Documents created by a computer system are tagged with an identification
tag that is a value which results from performing a cryptographic function on the hash
of the document and the unique processor identifier. Processor associators are stored
10 in a secure database, with each of the processor associators being associated with one
of the unique processor identifiers. In a first embodiment, the processor associators
are the same as the processor identifiers. In a second embodiment, the processor
identifiers are a function of their related processor associator. Documents may be
traced by a third party possessing a document (including an attached identification
15 tag) and a database of processor associators and user identification data associated
with each of the processor associators. In one embodiment, the third party computes a
document tag for the particular document using each of the processor associators until
a tag is computed which matches the tag that was attached to the document. When
such a match is found, the source of the document may be determined by reference to
20 the user identification data associated with the processor associator that was used to
compute the matching identification tag.

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